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Report of the Economic and Social Council

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 21 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the meeting of Ministers of Science and Technology of the member States of the Group of 77, held at Angra dos Reis, Brazil, on 3 September 2006 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly under agenda items 42 and 113.

(*Signed*) Dumisan S. **Kumalo**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the
Republic of South Africa to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

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Annex to the letter dated 21 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General

Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting of Ministers of Science and Technology of the member States of the Group of 77

Angra dos Reis, Brazil, 3 September 2006

1. The Ministers of Science and Technology of the Group of 77 and China met on the occasion of the 10th General Conference of the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) and the 9th General Assembly of the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNSO), held at Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 3 September 2006.

2. On this occasion, the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNSO) took a historic decision to transform itself into the Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS).

3. The Ministers warmly welcomed and approved the creation of COSTIS and mandated the Chairman of the G77 and the President of TWNSO to appoint a joint task force in order to ensure the effective operationalization of the Consortium before the end of 2006 (Decision annexed).

4. The Ministers noted that the challenges of sustainable development couldn't be met without the use of scientific knowledge, skills and technology for the benefit of developing countries. They emphasized the importance of commitment to work towards the promotion of the development of science and technology by increasing the allocation of resources to that end.

5. The Ministers emphasized the necessity to continue strengthening South-South cooperation as an indispensable element for a just and equitable international order and for preserving the policy space necessary for developing countries to pursue their development objectives. Attention was drawn to the fact that South-South cooperation provides a viable framework within which the more advanced developing countries should avail their technological innovation to less developed countries.

6. There was a general consensus for commitments to the implementation of the specific actions at the national and international level contained in the Doha Plan of Action, including, inter alia, the promotion and development of knowledge and technology in the South through the exchanges of expertise, programmes and experiences among research institutions and universities in order to establish South-South networks of "centres of excellence" in the South.

7. The Ministers focused their interactive dialogue on the challenges and strategies for science, technology and innovation for the South. The overall challenge identified was that even though many countries have created ministries to deal with science, technology and innovation, they were still not considered among the most urgent priorities, especially in the least developed countries. The tendency for many Governments was still to prioritize areas such as health, education and defence as deserving primary attention. However, the Ministers were encouraged by

reports of many developing countries in which science, technology and innovation were beginning to be elevated for greater attention and support.

8. Among the challenges are:

- Lack of adequate budgetary funding for science and technology;
- Lack of adequate human capital, including the lack of attraction of young people into scientific studies;
- Privatization of knowledge and lack of knowledge sharing; and
- Lack of intellectual property protection and indigenous know-how, including biodiversity.

9. Among the strategies are:

- Increasing regional cooperation in science and technology;
- Increasing funding for research and development in support of national growth;
- Integrating the COSTIS as part of the North-South strategic partnership;
- Sharing the indigenous scientific experience of the South such as strategies to deal with natural disaster management and treatment of diseases prevalent in the South;
- Placing science and technology on the national as well as the international development agenda;
- Creating synergies between public and private support for science and technology;
- Promoting ethics in science and technology and eliminating double standards;
- The G77 must facilitate the sharing of information on science and technology;
- Working for the establishment of International Scientific Indicators to monitor scientific achievements; and
- Elimination of illiteracy, promotion of higher education and the creation of infrastructure for research and development as a way to prevent brain drain.

10. There was a wide acknowledgement of the significant role played by various institutions of the Trieste-based system in the promotion of science and technology, and the Ministers were especially pleased with the strategic plan that TWAS and its affiliate organizations are pursuing in order to enhance the capabilities of scientific institutions and promote scientific capacity-building in developing countries. In this regard the role played by TWAS in the development of South-South cooperation through its sponsorship of fellowship programmes to promote research and scientific capacity was widely acknowledged.

11. While reiterating the need to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), special efforts must be made to build and sustain scientific capacity both at the individual and institutional level. Additional resources and partnerships are necessary to bring science-based solutions to critical economic and social needs and to enhance the role of science in promoting sustainable development in the developing world. The

Ministers emphasized the need to strengthen strategic partnerships between countries of the North and the South so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology.

12. The Ministers emphasized the importance and the supportive role of the United Nations system, particularly UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNIDO and the Special Unit for South-South cooperation, in promoting science and technology transfer and development in developing countries. There is a need to increase the capacity of these institutions to promote technological innovation. They welcomed the decision of ECOSOC to expand the membership of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) as a way to increase the voice of developing countries in matters of science and technology.

13. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the support by the Italian Government extended to the Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation. The Ministers committed themselves to convening the G77 High Level Forum and Exhibition on Science, Technology and Innovation, to be held in Trieste in 2007, which will offer an opportunity to review decisions taken at this meeting. Also the Ministers expressed a further commitment to meet on a biennial basis to exchange views and strengthen South-South initiatives in the field of science, technology and innovation.

14. The Ministers expressed their thanks to the Government and people of Brazil for their generous and warm hospitality, as well as the Brazilian Academy of Science and TWAS, for their excellent logistical support.

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Annex

Decision

The Ministers of Science and Technology of the member States of the Group of 77 and China meeting on 3 September 2006 at Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on the occasion of the 10th General Conference of the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), and the 9th General Assembly of the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNSO),

Recalling the decision adopted by the Heads of States and Governments at the Second South Summit held in Doha (State of Qatar), from 12 to 16 June 2005 (paragraph 35 of Doha Plan of Action) to support the efforts by the Trieste System, especially the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), to establish the G-77 Consortium on Science and Technology as agreed at the First South Summit,

1. Welcome the decision adopted by the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNSO) in Angra dos Reis to transform itself into the Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS).

2. Approve the creation of COSTIS and mandate the Chairman of the Group of 77 and the President of TWNSO to appoint a joint task force in order to ensure the effective operationalization of the Consortium before the end of 2006.